

Regarding HB 516, I wish to speak in opposition for several reasons.

- Every community should have the right to decide its own ordinances of inclusion. Ordinances of exclusion, which is what this is, are historically used by dictatorships, theocratic states and societies of intolerance- which I fervently hope is not your intention.
- Creating a law that disallows protection is counterintuitive to the purpose of government as set forth in both the Federal and State Constitutions, in which are stated explicitly the government's purpose and responsibility to protect its citizenry from discrimination, violence and other harms.
- This is an attempt to write prejudice and bigotry into the law. It is an attempt to tie local ordinances to State law in a way which keeps government from evolving as our understanding does- both scientific and social, creating a top-down model, instead of a cooperative, inter-dynamic process. State laws and statutes are informed by the experience of the people- don't disregard the deliberate and intentional process engaged in by sizable numbers of Montanans- processes which inform the future of our government.
- I am a gay man, a native Montanan. My partner is a native Montanan. All we want is to live our lives happily and free from fear in the state we both grew up in. This bill tells me we shouldn't have the right to be happy here.
- I am also a therapist, I work primarily with LGBT persons. The stories of fear and prejudice that I hear almost daily are heart-breaking. The stories of bullying and violence are also all too common and very real right here in the State of Montana. This bill simply ignores the needs of a suffering segment of the population who deserve to feel safe.
- This bill is discrimination and rejection of the right of communities to protect their citizens as they believe necessary. It removes the power to govern from local citizens, enshrining bigotry, ignorance and personal belief in blatant defiance of science, human experience and the basic goodwill of local people to protect their own.

Respectfully submitted,

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